



IRON RIVER NATIONAL FISH HATCHERY

July — December NEWSLETTER



Another year of spawning complete *by Carey Edwards*



Iron River National Fish Hatchery (NFH) spawns approximately four thousand lake trout and coaster brook trout each year. Eggs collected from these fish are used for restoration purposes in the upper Great Lakes by not only Iron River NFH but other entities in and out of the region. The spawning season began the first week in September with the Klondike Reef strain of lake trout. Over 2.4 million eggs were collected during a labor intensive two week period that included injecting each female with a tailored dose of LhRha, a naturally occurring hormone used to induce maturation of gametes. The Seneca Lake strain of lake trout, making their debut this year, followed shortly after and rounded out the total amount of lake trout eggs collected to 3.4 million.

Brook trout eggs were collected mid-November from the Tobin Harbor strain of coaster brook trout. Females were also injected with a tailored dose of LhRha, which successfully aided in condensing their normal spawning season of six to eight weeks down to two. Staff from the 1854 Treaty Authority was instrumental in the accomplishment of this task. Approximate number of brook trout eggs collected in two spawn takes is 2.1 million.

Lake trout eggs are already eyed-up and in jars at Iron River NFH or shipped off to other entities waiting to hatch and our brook trout eggs are developing in incubators. Stay tuned for egg-citing developments in our brook trout early-life rearing program.



Top left to right then down: The Iron River NFH staff pose for a photo on the last day of spawning. Large lake trout are air spawned to expel eggs quickly. The ladies are getting it done! Fish are sorted for gender and maturity before being injected with LhRh or spawned.

The Hatchery's 13th Annual Open House *by Carey Edwards*

The Iron River National Fish Hatchery (IRNFH) hosted its 13th annual open house this fall. The main focus of the event is to provide a safe and fun environment where children (and adults) can learn about fish, fisheries management, the sport of fishing and the great outdoors. In today's technological society, many children have not been exposed to fishing, hunting or even hiking in the woods. The future of our resource lies in the hands of these same children so it is imperative to reach and teach at an early age. Lucky for us, we have some great partners that feel the same way. So let the fun begin...

This year's open house landed on another bluebird day that brought in over 120 guests. The experience had a carnival feel to it in which young and young at heart could participate in events throughout the hatchery. The Wild Rivers Chapter of Trout Unlimited (TU) donated materials for event goers to tie their own fly and members showed off their expertise with hands-on fly casting demonstrations. Visitors were able to fish for the wily lawn bass and a prize (donated by the Friends of the Iron River National Fish Hatchery) was given to each child successfully landing their catch. Hatchery tours, Gyotaku (Japanese fish printing), minnow races and a youth archery range were also available for guests to try their hand at. The Brule River Sportsman's Club rounded out the day with a free cook out lunch for hungry visitors.

Partnerships are the cornerstone to any successful operation and the Iron River National Fish Hatchery is no exception. Thanks to these collaborations, the hatchery was able to host a fun and positive event and possibly helped shape the future stewards of our great resource. Stay tuned to see what new events are happening at the hatchery this year.

Below: Trout Unlimited assists with fly tying demonstrations. **Left from top to bottom:** Friends President Natalie Harwood mans the Friends booth. Members of the Brule River Sportsman's Club donated and cooked hot dogs for lunch. TU shows off with fly casting demos. Hatchery staff instruct both young and young at heart at the archery range.



Retired brood fish find a new home in Green Lake *by Brandon Keesler*

This spring, the Iron River National Fish Hatchery (NFH) stocked 332 retired broodstock lake trout into Green Lake near Red Lake, Minnesota. The stocking was a cooperative effort with the Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians. The Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians wanted these fish for sport and to control the large forage population in Green Lake. The fish ranged in size of 2.5 to 7 pounds each. The Red Lake Reservation is located on 840,000 acres in northern Minnesota and is part of the 1889 Treaty.

The Iron River NFH uses brood lake trout to supply our eggs every year. The hatchery produces 1.3 million lake trout annually that go to Lake Huron and Lake Michigan. As mature lake trout grow they produce more eggs. With this increase in egg production we don't need as many adults and can release some into the wild. We work with Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota, along with different tribal contacts to find good homes for these fish.



Northern Wisconsin lakes receive surplus brood stock

by Brandon Keesler



Here at the Iron River National Fish Hatchery (IRNF), we have an extensive brood program consisting of two species, three strains, and eight year classes of adult and juvenile fish. We provide Klondike Reef lake trout eggs for two programs and Coaster Brook trout eggs for nine programs across the U.S. Our Seneca Lake lake trout are just becoming mature and in the future will be providing eggs for our own program. We produce approximately 800,000 Klondike Reef and 870,000 coaster brook trout eyed-eggs annually. The egg requests can change yearly, so we constantly need to evaluate our egg production and brood fish needs.

Factors used to evaluate for how many fish to keep include how many eggs are produced per female and how well the eggs from those fish survive to the "eye up" stage. With the use of luteinizing hormone releasing hormone, or LHRH, we see a significantly higher survival rate to eye-up among our Klondike reef strain of Lake Trout. With the increase of viable eggs we no longer need to keep as much brood stock for future egg requests.

Once we decide how many fish to retire, we contact the agencies for local Native American tribes, along with the states of Minnesota, Michigan, and Wisconsin to find good homes for these fish. This year the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) requested we stock the lake trout into three coldwater lakes in Iron and Langlade counties in northern Wisconsin. After spawning was completed in mid-October, IRNFH staff, with the help of WDNR employees, we were able to stock Weber lake with 333 fish, totaling 2,436 lbs; Plunkett lake with 164 fish, totaling 634 lbs; Goto lake with 180 fish, totaling 977 lbs. These fish will be used to control native forage species in each lake along with being harvested by local fisherman and women. The beautiful fall colors only added to a very rewarding day.



Youth Conservation Corps Program *by Carey Edwards*



Above: Grace Edwards and Gus Johnson, this years YCC participants assist Biologist Paul Larson with planting trees. Below: YCC's level out gravel along the building.



The Youth Conservation Corp (YCC) is a summer employment program for young men and women aged 15 through 18 that allow America's youth to further the development and maintenance of the natural resource on federally managed lands. The program is 8-10 weeks in duration and is available to any appropriately aged youth regardless of social, economic, ethnic, racial and disabled status. Members are selected in a random method. YCC was authorized in 1970 and opportunities for employment are found within the National Park Service, US Forest Service and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. YCC members are provided the opportunity to increase self-esteem, learn self-discipline and work ethics, relate with peers and supervisors and develop knowledge and understanding of the nation's natural environment and heritage. It also prepares them for the responsibility of maintaining and managing these resources for the American people.

Grace Edwards and Gus Johnson are this year's YCC participants at the Iron River National Fish Hatchery. They were given a wide spectrum of tasks from natural resource management to hand labor projects as well as the opportunity to work with other agencies. They were instrumental in maintaining hatchery grounds and trails and participating in fish culture.

In the spring, all interested and qualifying applicants should submit an application to the Iron River National Fish Hatchery. Applications can be picked up at the hatchery or downloaded at http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/ycc/ycc_appl.pdf. We hope to see your application next spring!

The Hatchery, out and about....*by Carey Edwards*

The Iron River National Fish Hatchery hosts many events for all ages and is open to the public every day from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. for viewing and self-guided tours. We also participate in many outreach events throughout the year that are off station. These events forge new ties with partners and make old ones even stronger. They also allow us to advertise the hatchery's mission to a huge audience that we can't reach normally. We'll see you around!

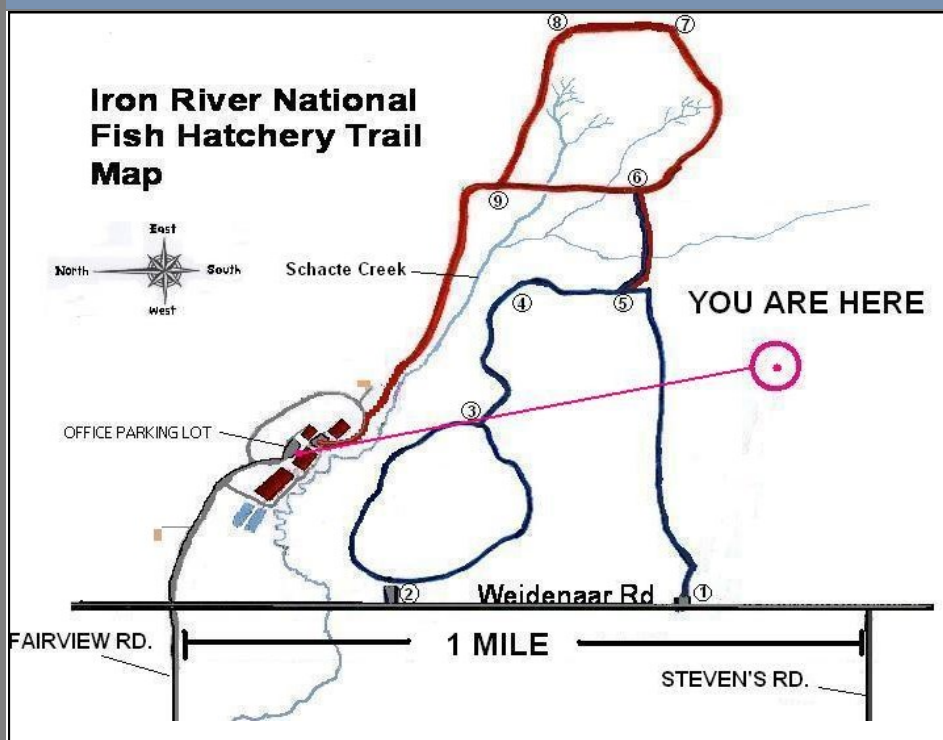
Bayfield County Fair: The Bayfield County Fair: August found the Iron River NFH making its thirteenth appearance at the Bayfield County Fair. With nearly 10,000 visitors, this event is a great way for the hatchery's mission to reach a large crowd. An informational booth was set up in the 4-H building for event goers to view.

Blueberry Festival Parade: Hosted by the Iron River Lions Club; this event targets both local and out of town visitors. Our 3,000 gallon tanker truck was driven this year by Hatchery Manager Nick Starzl. The distribution truck assists with stocking over 4.4 million lake trout in the Upper Great Lakes region each year. The truck was adorned with banners advertising our Open House on September 26th.

Staff Training Opportunities: Shawn Sanders participated in a three week detail and was stationed at Makah NFH. Carey Edwards attended a week of new supervisor training in Denver, CO and Nick Starzl, Jorge Buening, Paul Larson and Brandon Keesler attend a four day training session in Stevens Point, WI on recirculating systems.



Staff Updates and Hatchery Happenings...



DECEMBER 2015

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JANUARY 2016

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The 3 mile trail system is open year round for visitors to enjoy. It is groomed for classic cross country skiing and snowshoeing all winter long. Check out our **Facebook page** for the latest updates on trail conditions.



Friends Meeting Dec 2nd



Friends of the Iron River Hatchery

This could be you!! Join the Friends of the Iron River National Fish Hatchery today. Come share your ideas and thoughts and help promote the hatchery and its resource.

The Friend's of the Iron River National Fish Hatchery held their annual meeting on November 7th. New members were welcomed. The next meeting is December 2nd. A new

board will be selected at that time. A grant was awarded to purchase snowshoes that can be borrowed at the hatchery for use on hatchery trails. Check out the next newsletter or the Hatchery's Facebook page for more updates.

Not a member? Why wait? Come join the fun now!! Membership information can be found on the Friend's Facebook Page or by contacting the hatchery office 715-372-8510. New members are always welcome. Come join the fun. Check out the Friends merchandise at the hatchery.

